

BAY-DELTA PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE WATERSHED SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

Meeting Date/Location: Friday, March 15, 2002
Los Angeles River Center and Gardens – Atrium
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA

Meeting Attendees: See Attachment A

Meeting Handouts: See Attachment B

Welcome and Introductions

Robert Meacher and Martha Davis, Watershed Subcommittee Co-chairs, began the meeting with a welcome and round of introductions of all meeting participants (see Attachment A). Martha Davis explained that the intent of holding a Subcommittee meeting in southern California is to:

- Provide a forum for exchange of information
- Enable southern California projects to demonstrate their successes and the overall benefits to the CALFED program
- Allow CALFED staff to update southern California on CALFED activities

Overview of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Patrick Wright, Executive Director of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED) provided an overview of CALFED. Mr. Wright explained that CALFED was established to address water management and ecological health issues in the Bay-Delta. This year Senator Costa introduced a governance bill that will provide a framework for the roles and responsibilities of the 20 to 25 member agencies of CALFED and outline contracting guidelines that will ultimately streamline the implementation of the Program.

Mr. Wright explained that implementation of CALFED was originally envisioned as specific state and federal agencies eventually bearing the responsibility of implementing programs once developed. However, as CALFED evolved, the focus of that strategy shifted toward the facilitation and coordination of grass roots and other local efforts in order to optimize their value while meeting CALFED goals and objectives.

Mr. Wright described the state and federal funding vehicles under which CALFED has been operating. State general fund money has recently decreased but Proposition 204 and Proposition

13 have enabled CALFED to spend \$500,000,000 on projects. Proposition 40, the water bond initiative, is a potential source of funds in the future. Mr. Wright stated that CALFED agencies foresee the use of general fund and bond monies to fill some of the funding gaps in the Program; however, there may be a funding increase in some CALFED programs and a decrease in others (such as water conservation grants and watershed). CALFED's future funding will come from several sources, including Proposition 13, 40, state general funds, nonpoint source funds and others. Mr. Wright explained that all of these sources have different focal points but are dedicated to watershed management. Given the condition of the state budget, it will be a challenge to manage funds in a manner that will continue to support projects throughout the state while ultimately reaching the goals and objectives of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

Mr. Wright pointed out that there has been an approximate 100-person reduction in staff throughout the CALFED member agencies. As a result, CALFED has to rely more heavily on existing workgroups. Mr. Wright noted that the Watershed Subcommittee could serve as a model due to its unique efforts that have essentially moved the Watershed Program forward.

Maria Rea, State Resources Agency, explained that the Resources Agency was conducting a study of watershed groups throughout the state. A questionnaire within the study requested feedback on the benefits and weaknesses of existing programs and requested suggestions for revising the programs to better support local watershed activities. Ms. Rea stated that a primary comment was there are too many programs with differing requirements. As a result, many groups spend a great deal of time writing grant applications and altering projects to fit specific grant requirements. Ms. Rea noted that the funding flexibility within Proposition 40 presents a good opportunity to begin implementing changes in response to those comments. Ms. Rea stated that the Resources Agency would welcome additional feedback on how to strengthen its programs throughout California.

Overview of the CALFED Watershed Program

John Lowrie, CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program) Manager provided an overview of the Watershed Program. Mr. Lowrie explained that the focus of the watershed program is to promote and build local partnerships. The intent is that these partnerships will produce positive results on a broad regional scale. Mr. Lowrie explained the four primary objectives of CALFED are to provide good quality water, improve habitat, improve water supply reliability, and reduce levee breaches. To that end, the Watershed Program employs two categories of tools reach those goals: (1) technical assistance from member agencies and (2) financial assistance to promote collaboration and integration of local efforts. Mr. Lowrie noted that additional positions within state agencies have been authorized to support the Watershed Program but with the current hiring freeze, those positions cannot be filled.

Mr. Lowrie noted that the geographic scope of the Watershed Program is broad, including watersheds that flow to or receive water from the Bay-Delta. The Watershed Program strategy for the first 3 years of a 7-year long Phase I Implementation is to better define the relationships between watershed processes and to demonstrate the value of using community-based approaches.

Mr. Lowrie stated that the Watershed Program has been successful in coordinating efforts of

community-based programs. Last year, the Watershed Program implemented a proposal solicitation process that funded 54 projects totaling more than \$18 million. Mr. Lowrie added that it was encouraging to see the success of community-based efforts in securing matching funds and in expanding capacity building efforts.

Panel: Capacity Building in Southern California

Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council

Rick Harter provided some history and background on the Watershed Council. The Council, which celebrated its 5-year anniversary last summer, was formed to provide a forum in which to share perspectives and network. The primary areas of focus for the Council are mediation, education, planning, and acting as a “broker” of activities conducted by various groups. Mr. Harter stated that the brokering essentially serves as a capacity-building function. The first 4.5 years of activities were organized primarily by Dorothy Green and performed on a volunteer basis. Shortly after that, Mr. Harter was hired to serve as executive director. Mr. Harter stated that the Council outlined the activities that it supports in a grant application submitted to the Watershed Program. A grant was subsequently received, enabling the Council to further its activities through the hire of a staff scientist with experience in geographic information systems. Mr. Harter added that the Watershed Program grant also enables the Council to educate other community-based programs on the Watershed Program goals and objectives. The Council has been the recipient of an Organization Development Grant, a project-related grant, and a Watershed Partnership Seminar grant.

Orange County Watershed Program

Michael Wellborn introduced the audience to the Orange County Watershed Program. Mr. Wellborn indicated that there are 13 watersheds in Orange County. Awareness of the need to take action at a watershed level peaked when people began to ask, “Why are the beaches messed up?” Watershed activities were set in motion with a series of meetings with Orange County and other local government officials to discuss issues such as flooding and creek instability.

Mr. Wellborn stated that funding was requested and received from the Corps of Engineers to implement short, mid and long-term solutions. Short-term solutions involved activities related to urban runoff, water quality, and urban use of water; especially the efficient use of home irrigation. The mid-term activities involved complex issues related to infrastructure damaged during flooding events including roads, bridges, parks, etc. The long-term activities related to how future regulation/policies could be updated to include development practices, building standards, fire, greenway and other needs to avoid similar problems occurring in the future. Mr. Wellborn explained that the Orange County Watershed Program goals include increasing public awareness of watershed level issues and activities, supporting local ordinances that will effect positive change, and stabilization of streams.

Friends of the San Gabriel River

Jacqueline Lambrechts explained that Friends of the San Gabriel River (FSGR) is dedicated to the restoration and protection of the San Gabriel River and its tributaries. Ms. Lambrechts

provided some details on the San Gabriel River. The river has 3 dams located within the Angeles National Forest. Portions of the river have been engineered and straightened and others are encased in concrete. The San Gabriel River is one of the most productive trout streams in southern California. In the fall of 2000, water was diverted from the concrete lined portion of the river because it was believed that fish could not survive in the concrete-lined section. Many fish were found lying dead on the concrete lining.

Ms. Lambrechts explained that the latest activities of the FSGR include conducting water quality workshops, providing testimony at community meetings, and hosting a reception for the Secretary of the Resources Agency, Mary Nichols. Most recently, the Watershed Program provided grant funds to establish a citizen water quality-monitoring program. Outreach efforts have been coordinated to promote the program and secure volunteers. FSGR has also coordinated with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to assist in developing TMDLs for the San Gabriel River. Ms. Lambrechts stated that coordination is also ongoing with Orange County its in implementation of the Coyote Creek subwatershed plan through integration of citizen monitoring efforts.

San Diego Watershed Connections

Suzanne Michaels provided some background on San Diego Watershed Connections. She stated that the research approach for this project was unique in that it involved social scientists evaluating impacts on the environment. The research approach was broad and included interviews with scientists, engineers and landowners. The outcome of the study indicated two primary problem areas in San Diego; water quality and wetland destruction. Ms. Michaels stated that in San Diego there are beach closures, urban expansion, and 3,000 miles of sewage infrastructure. She posed the question: How do you obtain good water if you are economically disadvantaged? If you are wealthy, water can be imported from elsewhere. If you are not wealthy, you are unable to obtain good water. Poor water quality impacts are felt in both the human population as well as the ecological population. Ms. Michaels stated that the second problem area is wetland destruction. Wetlands are being filled as a result of urban expansion; leaving fewer and fewer wetlands while increasing a sense that wetlands should be protected and untouched. As a result, wetlands are preserved and fenced to prohibit access. Prohibiting access does not stimulate stewardship or provide recreational value. Therefore, the intent to protect can often have an opposite and unintended negative result.

Ms. Michaels explained that a geographic approach to environmental impacts provides a fresh view to solving environmental problems. She noted that local efforts can provide great benefit, but without a regional understanding of watershed issues, the benefits are not as great. Ms. Michael added that the Colorado River Delta is an excellent example of the need for binational cooperation between Mexico and the United States to address regional, large scale watershed issues. In order to understand human impacts, you must understand the culture and history of the people of the watershed.

In San Diego, Ms. Michaels stated that San Diego River Connections is pushing for integration of watershed activities. Current planning activities that may be integrated include habitat conservation, watershed planning, and smart growth.

Panel: Watershed Projects: Making Connections to the Bay-Delta System

Water Efficiency in Chino Basin

Martha Davis, Inland Empires Utility Agency (IEUA), discussed water efficiency planning in the Chino Basin. She explained that the Chino Basin, part of the Santa Ana Watershed, is approximately 242 square miles in size with 5.7 million acre-feet of storage. By the year 2020, the population of the Chino Basin is expected to nearly double from 700,000 to 1.2 million. Ms. Davis noted that 30 percent of southern California's water supply is imported; 99 percent of which comes from the Bay-Delta via the State Water Project. Ms. Davis stated that the need to work cooperatively within the Chino Basin to take advantage of unused storage capacity and improve water quality was not long ago realized. With funding received from CALFED, a Storm Water Workshop was held in July 2001. This workshop brought several stakeholders together to examine storm water recharge opportunities. Currently there is approximately 50,000 acre feet of storm water runoff; 7,500 acre-feet is captured, 23,000 acre feet could be captured in recharge basins and an additional 10,000 – 20,000 acre-feet could be captured through on-site recharge. Ms. Davis explained that implementing recharge activities would increase and protect the yield of the Chino basin, maximize recharge of recycled water, and provide stored water that will reduce pressure on the San Francisco Bay-Delta supplies.

Ms. Davis discussed the local benefits of storm water recharge including a reduction in flooding, improvement of water quality, enhancement of recreational opportunities and restoration of the natural hydrology to support habitat. Ms. Davis indicated that next steps in the Chino Basin storm water programs consist of the development of education/and outreach campaign, a water resources guide and website, and demonstration projects such as the IEUA Administrative Headquarters. Ms. Davis noted the IEUA Headquarters incorporates energy efficient and environmentally sound materials with recycled products throughout the interior and exterior (tiles and carpet, parking lot, gardens). The landscaping incorporates drought tolerant gardens with native species supported by recycled water as well as a storm water capture demonstration area.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and Tree People

Vik Bapna introduced the Sun Valley Watershed Project. The Sun Valley watershed is a pilot watershed management project by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works in partnership with Tree People. He explained that the Sun Valley watershed is 4.4 square miles and is a tributary to the Los Angeles River. The watershed is highly urbanized with active gravel mines and landfills, numerous auto dismantling operations and other commercial and industrial operations. Chronic flooding has increased awareness of the need for a watershed planning approach. Mr. Bapna mentioned that the Sun Valley Watershed Stakeholder Group was convened to explore sustainable solutions to flooding problems outside of traditional methods (i.e., storm drains and other infrastructure). The mission of the group is to "solve the local flooding problem while retaining all storm water runoff from the watershed, increasing water conservation, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat, and reducing storm water pollution." Most notably, the group is comprised of 65 participants representing state agencies, local municipalities, private landowners and community groups. With program implementation, it is estimated that approximately 3,200 acre feet of storm water per year could be captured for

reuse and groundwater recharge. Mr. Bapna indicated that the program links to the Bay-Delta in that it will ultimately reduce reliance upon Bay-Delta water. He noted that as a pilot project, the Sun Valley Watershed Management Project could be replicated throughout the Southern California, amplifying the positive effects to the Bay-Delta Region. Mr. Bapna then introduced Rebecca Drayse, with Tree People who is managing the public outreach portion of the Sun Valley project.

Rebecca Drayse described the public outreach activities being conducted for the Sun Valley project. To begin the outreach efforts, a baseline literary poll was conducted in the watershed. The poll posed questions relating to where domestic water comes from and sought to determine literary levels with respect to environmental terminology used in watershed activities. Ms. Drayse indicated that ongoing and future outreach activities would include quarterly newsletters (printed in English and Spanish), educational brochures, engaging community leaders in activities, tables at community events, school education programs, and media events. Ms. Drayse stated that all of these activities are intended to promote awareness of the issues in the Sun Valley Watershed and build capacity within the community. The results of public outreach activities were recently realized at Broadus Elementary School where a Green Team of students and faculty participated in the design and implementation of a storm water infiltration system beneath a playing field.

Northeast Trees

Eileen Takata provided some information on the Arroyo Seco Watershed Management Plan and Education Program that Northeast Trees is developing with Watershed Program grant funds. She stated that the goals of the program are to restore the natural hydrological functioning of the watershed, including stream restoration; better manage, optimize, and conserve water resources and improve water quality; improve habitat quality, quantity and connectivity; improve recreational opportunities; foster long-term agency and organizational support; and education and involve the public in watershed stewardship.

Ms. Takata mentioned that the Watershed Program grant enabled planning and studies to be conducted. Information was gathered related to water input and output, where water is stored, used and how it can be conserved. She noted that these activities have resulted in recommendations for watershed actions that have been outlined in a Phase II Summary report soon to be released. Northeast Trees is also conducting education and outreach programs by means of a website, workshops, and various presentations and education materials. Ms. Takata noted that as a result of the success of the program, other funding opportunities and grants have become available.

Latino Issues Forum/EJ Coalition on Water and BUHP Advocates

Torri Estrada discussed environmental justice and efforts to encourage low-income communities to initiate watershed programs. He explained that there are 17 principles of environmental justice. The first principle is that people and communities have the right to equal environmental protection under the law and to live, work, and play in communities that are safe, healthy, and free of life-threatening conditions. In California, there are a disproportionate number of water-quality impaired and ecologically degraded aquatic systems in communities of

color (land use, watershed, and community health nexus). In addition, these communities are often lacking access to and the benefit from public expenditures and funding for water as well as programs to address community water problems and environmental justice issues.

Mr. Estrada stated that the Environmental Justice Coalition was formed in 1999 in response to CALFED and the lack of meaningful participation of people of color and low-income communities. The Coalition serves to link locally focused environmental justice efforts on water to state-level policymaking and management. The intent of the EJ Coalition on water is to expand and build upon the public rights related to water by facilitating broader participation of people of color in local and statewide water policy and planning. In addition, it intends to facilitate collaboration among environmental justice, rural, ethnic, farm workers, and environmental communities.

Mr. Estrada noted that there are community-based activities in low-income communities such as the Mothers of East LA and other Los Angeles community-based organizations, that support low-flow toilet retrofit programs that provide huge water savings in Los Angeles. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the Bay-View Hunters Point restoration of Yosemite Creek presents an opportunity to engage high school students in water quality sampling and wildlife habitat assessment while meeting CALFED goals. Mr. Estrada indicated that in order to implement such activities, low-income communities need funding, technical assistance, cooperative agency partners, user-friendly programs with flexible timelines, and access to resources. Historically, low-income communities of color have not had access to federal and state funding. In addition, matching requirements for funding can often pose an undue burden in already economically disadvantaged communities.

Mr. Estrada pointed out that in response to the need to address environmental justice, CALFED has agreed to integrate environmental justice across CALFED programs. He stated that CALFED has included environmental justice issues in its priority actions, including support of environmental justice representatives on CALFED advisory committees and subcommittees. These efforts will result in an increase in capacity to conduct meaningful outreach and participation in decision-making in the Bay-Delta.

Next Steps in Building Partnerships: CALFED Bay-Delta Program and Southern California Watershed Interests

Patrick Wright encouraged the participants to educate their legislative representatives of the importance of watershed management projects such as those presented. He commented that it is much more effective for representatives to hear about watershed management benefits from the people in the watersheds than from agency representatives. To optimize the benefits that may be derived from Proposition 40 funding, Mr. Wright encouraged the participants to convey their ideas as to the types of projects Proposition 40 should fund and the manner in which funds are dispersed.

Discussion

A meeting participant commented that the competitive grant process worked well in spreading monies across the state. However, watershed coordinators are often needed to write grant

applications. In light of the fact that bond monies are earmarked for capital projects, the ability to fund coordinators is often ruled out. Funds need to be specifically allocated to watershed coordinators.

Another participant noted that the competitive grant process works well; however, the limitations and requirements can be cumbersome and often force applicants to redesign their projects to fit individual funding requirements. In addition, the application process can be expensive and time-consuming, often eliminating low-income communities.

One participant noted the need for a prioritization system. For example, there are several watershed coordinators who have gained valuable experience over the last two years who will no longer have funding after June 2002. Without a priority to continue that funding beyond June, these folks will likely find new jobs and the watersheds will lose their experience.

A participant suggested a multi-group application requirement that would call for coordination with partners. Those partners could include resource agencies, municipalities, and local watershed groups.

Wrap-up and De-brief of Meeting

Martha Davis and Robert Meacher asked the participants to provide their comments on the meeting. Suggestions noted were to incorporate longer breaks that would provide an opportunity to network amongst attendees, and having break out groups with technical experts to enable information exchange.

Ms. Davis and Mr. Meacher thanked the participants for attending and the meeting was adjourned.

Attachment A

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Name	Affiliation
Adulson, Mark	Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board
Bapna, Vik	LA County Department of Public Works
Beck, Michael	Endangered Habitats League
Berg, Joe	MWD of Orange County
Bullard, Kathleen	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Bundy, Summer	Department of Water Resources
Catalano, Jeff	City of Los Angeles
Chapman, Trish	Coastal Conservancy
Coulter, Ken	SWRCB
Czamanske, Davis	Sierra Club
Davis, Martha	Inland Empire Utilities Agency/BDPAC
Delgado, Doug	Calvine Abe Associates
Derivi, Tanya	LADWP
Donovan, Jim	NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
Drayse, Rebecca	TreePeople
Drill, Sabrina	UC Cooperative Extension
Estrada, Torri	Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
Everts, Conner	Southern California Watershed Alliance
Flores, Macaria	LA Regional Water Quality Control Board
Frances, Tom	Ballona Wetlands Land Trust
Fox, Dennis	Kelliv Lake Coordinated Resource Management Program
Golding, Arthur	Arthur Golding & Associates
Green, Dorothy	LASG Watershed Council
Harter, Rick	Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council
Haze, Steve	Millerton Area Watershed Coalition
Hazzard, Michael	
Henderson, Brad	Department of Fish and Game
Horne, Mark	EIP Associates
Hoyos, Renee	California Resources Agency
Hranilovich, Jennifer	The Trust for Public Land
Jacobs, Selene	Jones & Stokes
Johnson, Melissa Cole	RCD SMA
Kampe, Lynnette	North East Trees
Kennedy, Francine	City of San Juan Capistrano
Kesinger, Kit	Ramona MWD & Iron Mountain Conservancy
Labahn, Ed	Dana Point resident
Lambrichts, Jacqueline	Friends of San Gabriel River
Lamm, Jim	Ballona Creek Renaissance and Watershed Task Force
Lessick, Dale	Irvine Ranch Water District/private citizen

Lowrie, John
Lund, Leval
Matson, Tanya
Matsuyama, Kathie
May, Don
Meacher, Robert
Mead, Aaron
Miranda, Salomon
Ngugi, Nancy
Ohare, Debra
Olgin, Nami
Padzik, Helene
Reed, Rhonda
Rierdan, Robert
Rose, Kathy
Segawa, Cheryl
Scotto, Hazel
Shapin, Nim
Smith, Lynda
Spiny-Well, Frances
Stewart, Peggy
Swearingen, Jeanne
Takata, Eileen
Thomas, Rick
Thum, Alan
Webb, Olin
Wellborn, Mike
Wermiel, Dan
Weschler, Peter
Ziegler, Sam

CALFED
CE
 Jones & Stokes
Orange County/ Watersheds Division
California Earth Corps
Regional Council for Rural Counties/BDPAC
Philip Williams & Associates
Department of Water Resources
LA Regional Water Quality Control Board
Mountains Restoration Trust
Altadena Foothills Conservancy
Iron Mountain Conservancy
Department of Fish and Game/AFRP
San Diego River Park Lakeside Conservancy
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board
City of San Diego
League of Women Voters
Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force
Metropolitan Water District
Mono Lake Committee
Arroyo Seco Fd
Riverview Water District
North East Trees
San Gabriel Mountain Regional Conservancy
San Eliso Lagoon Conservancy
BUHP Community Advocates
County of Orange
CALFED
Environmental Water Caucus
USEPA

Attachment B

MEETING MATERIALS

- CALFED Bay-Delta Program Watershed Program Plan
 - Meeting Agenda
 - February 15, 2002, BDPAC Watershed Subcommittee Meeting Summary
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